

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

To: <div style="text-align: center;">see form PCT/ISA/220</div>		<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> REC'D 22 MAY 2006 WIPO PCT </div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin-top: 10px;">PCT</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> WRITTEN OPINION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY (PCT Rule 43bis.1) </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 10px;"> Date of mailing (day/month/year) see form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) </div>	
Applicant's or agent's file reference see form PCT/ISA/220		FOR FURTHER ACTION See paragraph 2 below	
International application No. PCT/EP2005/054499	International filing date (day/month/year) 09.09.2005	Priority date (day/month/year)	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC INV. H04M3/56 H04M9/02			
Applicant ROBERT BOSCH GMBH			
<div> <div>1. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. I Basis of the opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. II Priority <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VI Certain documents cited <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application <input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div>2. FURTHER ACTION</div> <p>If a demand for international preliminary examination is made, this opinion will usually be considered to be a written opinion of the International Preliminary Examining Authority ("IPEA") except that this does not apply where the applicant chooses an Authority other than this one to be the IPEA and the chosen IPEA has notified the International Bureau under Rule 66.1bis(b) that written opinions of this International Searching Authority will not be so considered.</p> <p>If this opinion is, as provided above, considered to be a written opinion of the IPEA, the applicant is invited to submit to the IPEA a written reply together, where appropriate, with amendments, before the expiration of 3 months from the date of mailing of Form PCT/ISA/220 or before the expiration of 22 months from the priority date, whichever expires later.</p> <p>For further options, see Form PCT/ISA/220.</p> </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <div>3. For further details, see notes to Form PCT/ISA/220.</div> </div>			
Name and mailing address of the ISA: <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465 </div> </div>		<div> <div>Date of completion of this opinion</div> <div>see form PCT/ISA/210</div> </div>	
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**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.
PCT/EP2005/054499

Box No. I Basis of the opinion

1. With regard to the **language**, this opinion has been established on the basis of:

- ☒ the international application in the language in which it was filed
- ☐ a translation of the international application into , which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (Rules 12.3(a) and 23.1 (b)).

2. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application and necessary to the claimed invention, this opinion has been established on the basis of:

a. type of material:

- ☐ a sequence listing
- ☐ table(s) related to the sequence listing

b. format of material:

- ☐ on paper
- ☐ in electronic form

c. time of filing/furnishing:

- ☐ contained in the international application as filed.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in electronic form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority for the purposes of search.

3. ☐ In addition, in the case that more than one version or copy of a sequence listing and/or table relating thereto has been filed or furnished, the required statements that the information in the subsequent or additional copies is identical to that in the application as filed or does not go beyond the application as filed, as appropriate, were furnished.

4. Additional comments:

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.
PCT/EP2005/054499

Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43b/s.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	1-8,10,11
	No: Claims	9
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	
	No: Claims	1-11
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1-11
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

Reference is made to the following documents:

- D1: EP-A-0 484 793 (N.V. PHILIPS' GLOEILAMPENFABRIEKEN; PHILIPS ELECTRONICS N.V) 13 May 1992 (1992-05-13) cited in the application
D2: EP-A-1 320 244 (GIRA GIERSEIPEN GMBH. & CO. KG) 18 June 2003 (2003-06-18)
D3: US-B1-6 216 339 (RICH DANIEL) 17 April 2001 (2001-04-17)
D4: US 2003/059025 A1 (MEYERSON ROBERT F ET AL) 27 March 2003 (2003-03-27)

Re Item V

Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. **Claim 1** does not meet the requirements of Article 33(3) PCT due to the subject-matter therein lacking an inventive step.

Document D1, which is considered to represent the most relevant state of the art, discloses a conference system with communication stations (or "discussion units") specifically conceived for delegates and chairmen and having corresponding functionality (col 8, lines 47-53; col 9, lines 39-45; and col 9, line 57 - col 10, line 4). With respect to the features of claim 1 of the current application, it comprises (the references in parentheses relating to D1):

- a discussion unit for use in a conference system (col 9, lines 39-45),
- wherein the discussion unit is adapted to be connected to at least one second distribution unit of the conference system (col 9, lines 39-45; figure 1),

Although in D1 there is indication for the fact that a delegate's communication station can be upgraded to a system operator unit (col 10, lines 9-14: "the communication station for the system operator may comprise a unit 7 which also presents more options and further includes ... ") rather than requiring completely unique hardware,

there is no explicit disclosure of the following features of claim 1:

- the discussion unit is switchable between at least two operating modes,
- wherein the discussion unit further comprises at least one exchangeable control out of a set of controls comprising at least one control for each of the operating modes,
- and wherein the at least one exchangeable control is adapted to indicate to a user the operating mode currently used and to allow for the user to control the discussion unit.

The objective technical problem can thus be formulated as how to avoid the high installation and storage costs associated with tailoring the conference system to the requirements of each room/conference.

When addressing this problem, the person skilled in the art would consult the prior art available and come across the document D2. This discloses a modular communications and control system, whereby each of the units can be assigned particular functionality according to plug-in modules (abstract; paragraphs [0006], [0007], [0009]). Specifically mentioned are function modules for additional keys, microphones, displays, cameras... (paragraph [0023]).

In the same way, document D4 discloses a modular communication station whereby functionality is changed and/or supplemented by plug-in modules (paragraph [0012]; figure 3). Indeed, any number of documents could be cited in order to show that it is a common cost-saving design decision to modify functionality by means of add-on modules. This also increases flexibility and allows for rapid changes in configuration.

Therefore, when faced with the objective technical problem, the person skilled in the art would adapt the design of the units in D1 in order to make them modular in nature such as to be able to satisfy the needs for different operational functionality / modes ("chairman", "delegate", "system operator" ...) with a maximum of flexibility and minimum cost. In doing so, he would not need to exercise an inventive step.

2. The additional features introduced by dependent claims 2-8 do not appear to add anything of inventive significance to the subject-matter of the claims to which they refer and hence said claims are not inventive under Article 33(3) PCT. The reasons for this are as follows:

Claim 2 Different roles of conference participants are disclosed in D1, including delegates and chairmen (figure 2 and col 9, line 25 - col 10, line 4).

Claim 3 "Auxiliary control" is very vague and any of the additional modular components disclosed by D2 or D4 could construed as being an "auxiliary control".

Claim 4 On the assumption that this claim aims to define the presence of more than one module, this is disclosed by both D2 (paragraph [0007]) and D4 (figure 3).

Claim 5 Push-buttons as part of an add-on module are described by both D2 (paragraph [0023]) and D4 (figure 3).

Claim 6 The specification of the push button being a "split push-button" is a trivial design matter.

CI 7,8 The provision of "ejector facilities" is common in the case where sub-components or modules need to be removed from a base unit. For example, document D3 shows an ejector mechanism for modular components.

3. **Claim 9** defines an "ejector tool" without specifying any features of said tool which would serve to render it new and inventive. Hence, any instrument such as a common screwdriver would anticipate said tool, but in particular the instrument described in D3. Hence the subject-matter of claim 9 is not novel, Article 33(2) PCT.

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING
AUTHORITY (SEPARATE SHEET)**

International application No.

PCT/EP2005/054499

4. **Claim 10** simply defines a plurality of modules according to claims 4-8 and so its subject-matter is not inventive, Article 33(3) PCT.
5. **Claim 11** simply defines a plurality of discussion units according to those defined in previous claims and so its subject-matter is not inventive, Article 33(3) PCT.